SHALL ARCHITECTS BE DIPLOMA'D.

I am glad to see that the columns of The Builder are still occupied in reminding the Council of the Institute of British Architects of the necessity for amending the laws which govern their body. The observations in answer to your correspondent, "W. X. W.," were very just, and are, I imagine, pretty nearly the feelings of three-fourths of the profession; but I was somewhat surprised, on reading through the article on the amendment of the Institute of Architects (knowing the interest you take in the welfare of the profession), to find that you seemed to throw cold water on the proposal to obtain a legislative enactment forbidding any architect or engineer to practise without a *diploma*. Now, Sir, I am fully persuaded that this is the only means whereby to ensure proper and qualified practitioners in our art.

You seem to reason, Mr. Editor, that "it is not desirable." I consider that if architects have to erect buildings and works, and are thereby entrusted with the lives and property of her Majesty's subjects, they should be compelled to take out a diploma of capability authorising them to practise as such, in the same way as gentlemen of the law, medical men, and even chemists and druggists, have to do, before they can practise in either of their respective capacities. It would not only render the profession more respectable, but it would give a dignity to its practitioners. The public would look at its members as duly qualified and honourable men, and not disregard our talents, as they evidently do at the present, as may be proved by the most disgraceful and shameful way in which competitions are conducted; in fact, if diplomas were granted, then none but men properly schooled into the profession would be among its members.

You remark also that "it is opposed to the spirit of the times." I am sure no opposition would be met with in the majority of the profession of architects themselves,—they are really yearning for such a movement, and I could almost speak positively that if a petition were set on foot for such purpose, it would be signed by at least three-fourths of the members of the body. If opposition to this diploma scheme be meant in your remark to refer to the public, I think it is no more than in accordance with reason that they would feel satisfied to know, that no person could practise as an architect or engineer without being duly qualified to act in such capacity; 1st. For the reasons abovementioned; and 2ndly. It would prevent their employing any incompetent person, or mere quack, who would, in all probability, injudiciously expend their clients' property.

X. X.

1st. You say, "that *a diploma in architecture* is by no means likely, even if it were in all respects desirable." Now, as to the likelihood of the renovation,—I believe the time is not far distant when we shall see it brought about; but as to the desirableness of such a scheme, every architect who has the least love for his profession must desire it, if only to rid us of the innumerable set of quack draughtsmen who are now being quarterly manufactured at the low rate of ten guineas. My office, Sir, is literally besieged by them, trying to obtain employment; yet they cannot draw a straight line. Again, many architects have now in their offices young men, without any premiums being given, who have no love for the profession they are unfortunately placed in, but because it was a good opening they *must become architects*, not considering that an architect *must have a mind*. What is the consequence? Why, at the end of their articles they cannot explain the ruling principles that exist either in Grecian or Roman architecture; they may know the five orders when placed before them, but, Sir, in many cases that is the utmost, and I am fully aware from experience I am not exaggerating. Yet when their articles are concluded, they expect and ask for the same remuneration as clever draughtsmen, swell the number of that class, and in many cases have unhappily opportunities given them of piling up living monuments of their ignorance, to disfigure the face of this glorious land and disgust the eyes of every beholder; whereas the experienced, fully qualified, and clever man, is thrown aside. I will not speak of the injurious system of employing builders as architects, because that would soon die away if we had a properly qualified body of professional men. You say the spirit of the time is directly opposed to such a restriction. Then, Sir, how do you reconcile the establishment of the Pharmaceutical Society for the examination and granting diplomas, even to druggists? If it can be done in one case, it can in another; *if it be desirable*, do not talk of the spirit of the times being against us, but let us try and obtain it: the greater the difficulties, the greater the glory in winning.

A Practitioner.

It has often appeared to me a sad mistake that a profession like that of architects should be split into several societies (no one of which is sufficiently powerful to carry with it the feeling of the whole body, nor the acquiescence of the public), instead of having one grand and comprehensive scheme of union for its members, which should indeed improve, exalt, and raise their own character, and at the same time command the esteem of the public. Nothing short of a College can be expected to have this desirable effect.

To make the profession respected, and its professors respectable; to rescue the calling of an ennobling pursuit from the grasp of the mere adventurer; to give a tone to public taste, to instruct, enlighten, and improve, would be the praiseworthy (and successful) endeavours of a college established by the general consent of the profession. In a few words one may state some of the advantages which would attach to an architectural college of enlarged membership under a charter: a school of instruction, not to interfere with private tuition, but rather to complete the education—a comprehensive library—a museum—a collection of models of ancient and modern buildings—experiments in different arts—laws to establish precedents—periodical meetings for lectures and discussion—a thorough understanding of the position of architects—a court of appeal in all matters of dispute or etiquette, and a provision for decayed members, their widows, or orphans.

G. R. French.

BRITISH ARCHÆOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION.

PUBLIC MEETING, NOVEMBER 9, 1849.

Mr. Pettigrew, Vice-President, in the chair.

Mr. Purland exhibited a collection of rubbings of some of the most interesting brasses in the churches of Norwich, accompanied by some descriptive remarks.—Mr. Waller observed that the greater part of these brasses belonged to civilians, which was to be accounted for by the extent to which the clothing trade was carried on in the eastern counties. He likewise drew attention to a brass, of the latter part of the fifteenth century, belonging to a knight, the inscription attached to which is about a century later, and relates to another person. He remarked that many of these brasses showed a peculiar mode of forming the features used in Norfolk and Suffolk, and some were evidently Flemish. Much has been said about the destruction of brasses during the civil wars, but a far greater havoc has been committed in modern times. He had sought in vain in many of the churches of Norfolk and Suffolk for brasses figured in Cotman and other authors.—Mr. W. A. Combs exhibited a small brass plate bearing the following inscription:—"Henry Bullayen the sone of Sir Thomas Bullayen." Mr. C. stated that he had ascertained that it belonged to Hever Church, Kent, and that its original place (to which he intended to restore it) was close to the tomb of Sir Thomas Bolleyn, the father of Anne, Queen of Henry VIII. He expressed his inability to discover the relationship of the person here commemorated, as Sir Thomas does not appear to have had any son of that name. He presumed, judging from the size of the stone, the person must have been a child.

Mr. Price stated that in the neighbouring church of Penshurst there is a similar small brass cross and inscription plate to the memory of "Thomas Bullayen, the sone of Sir Thomas Bullayen;" and that probably, from neither of them being mentioned in the Bolleyn pedigree, they both died in their infancy. He had no doubt they were the brothers of the ill-fated queen. Mr. Price added that the Hever brass had been stolen years ago, and he rejoiced to find that at the least some portion of it was in existence, and likely to be restored to its proper place.

Dr. Jessop forwarded for exhibition a brass seal, bearing two matrices: the smaller one represents the head of a bull, the other the same emblem, with a legend of a very curious character, and which forms the subject of a paper displaying antiquarian and philological research. Mr. Price furnished a brief abstract, observing that, although the seal was probably not older than the fifteenth century, the legend was doubtless copied from some antique gem or amulet, and judging from its resemblance to some of the mystic legends and doctrines of the Gnostics, was referable to a very early period of the Christian era. The inscription is as follows:—"⊣R TO ONR NI CION OOIC," which Dr. J., reading it SERAPIS TO ONOMA AI ΣΙΟΝ the last four letters being merely a vocalic exclamation, interprets "Serapis, the great name ever divine, O hail!" The inscription commences with the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet, the cross being the ancient form of the *tau*. These characters, from their extreme position, were thought symbolical of the whole compass of language, and expressive of universality. The word *aleph* means captain or leader, also a bull. *Tau* is a limit or boundary, and from its form was considered by the Egyptians as typical of horns. In describing at some length the various modifications of the cross, Dr. J. remarks, that at the destruction of the temple of Serapis (the bull-headed deity of the Egyptians), certain cruciform characters were found engraven on stones. These, both Christians and idolators claimed as symbols of their respective creeds. Traces of this emblem have been discovered in the ruins of Nineveh (*vide* Layard), and they abound in the sculptures of Egypt. The Gnostics blended some of the superstitions of Egypt with their mysteries. They adopted the bull, or its head, as an emblem of Christ.

RATING ST. MARY'S, WHITECHAPEL.

FIXTURES AND FIXED MACHINES.

A meeting of the parishioners of St. Mary's, Whitechapel, was held last week, for the purpose of receiving a report from a committee appointed to investigate the question as to the rating of machinery and other fixtures connected with property within the parish.

The report stated that, considering the importance of the matters submitted for their consideration, they had prepared a case, and submitted it to the consideration of the Attorney-General and Mr. Bodkin, who had given it as their opinion that *all fixed machines, as well as all fixtures*, in houses and shops within the parish, were liable to be rated for the support of the poor. The committee were therefore of opinion that all the parish rates raised under the authority of the local Act should be levied in terms of that finding,—that the vestry should, by means of committees, carry out the assessment of the parish under that system of rating,—and that notice should be given to the Middlesex magistrates and the property-tax commissioners of the change which had taken place in consequence of adopting the system recommended in the opinion referred to.

The report having been received, it was further resolved that as a just and equitable assessment could not be made without a survey of all the rateable property in the parish, including machinery, and fixtures in shops and dwelling-houses, competent professional surveyors be appointed to survey all the property in the parish, so that the rates might be made on a sound and legal basis. This would be all very well if other parishes adopted the same course, but it should be remembered, so long as this is not the case, that inasmuch as the police and other taxes are taken on the same rating, the inhabitants of St. Mary's, Whitechapel, will have to pay a larger proportion of these latter than their neighbours.

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